

**GREAT POWER POLITICO-MILITARY
DECISION-MAKING: AMERICAN FOREIGN
POLICY AT TEHERAN AND YALTA**

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by

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Introduction and Focus

This paper will focus upon American foreign policy during World War II. More specifically, it will examine the military and political cause-effect relationship of great power authority as it was practiced by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain at the Teheran and Yalta summit conferences. The main thrust of the discussion is intended to examine the belief that:

American wartime diplomacy was complicated by the lack of clear distinction between diplomacy as such concerning political matters and decisions of military policy, the latter frequently being made without consideration of their political implications or their possible effects on postwar foreign policy.¹

In short, the primary issues will revolve about the interaction of political and military decision-making processes attendant to the conduct of great power summits.

The term "great power" can be defined as a state that "must be able to maintain itself (in war) against all others, even when they are united...".² In this context it has been said of great powers that:

(1) ...Great Power decisions occur within the context of war and war emergencies...

(2) ...Great Power decisions... [are] ...characteristically shortsighted. ...Crisis situations tend to

¹ Ruhl Bartlett, Policy and Power: Two Centuries of American Foreign Relations (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963), p. 202.

² George Modelski, Principles of World Politics (New York: Free Press, 1972), p. 142.

foreclose alternatives and direct attention to military matters at the expense of long-range considerations favoring world order. ...The short-sightedness of these decisions is attributable to the exigencies of war; yet, inasmuch as war is linked directly to Great Power status and to its exercise, it also becomes an element of structural weakness in the entire system.

(3) The immediate costs of Great Power decisions are usually borne by the smaller states that are affected by them rather than by the Great Powers themselves. ...As long as the concessions could be made at the expense of others, the Great Powers have tended to slide into poorly conceived settlements that are [e]ffective in producing order, but which are] generally also unjust.³

This pejorative description of the nation-state's performance as primary actor in the conduct of international relations may or may not be deserved. However, it does bring to center-stage the important subject of military decision-making for the short term as it affects long-range political issues.

My methodology will consist of an examination into the nature of the American military decision-making process during World War II, and an inquiry into the ways in which it informed the political decisions emanating from the wartime conferences. I have chosen the events surrounding summit conferences as the vehicle of my discussion because the wartime meetings between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin represented the apex of the Allied politico-military hierarchy during World War II. Indeed, summit conferences in general

³ Modelski, p. 173. This text is essentially a critique of the nation-state dominant system of international relations and the great power institution which maintains it.

may be compared with the exposed tip of an iceberg; that is, the events of summit conferences mirror in micro-cosm the much broader, but less visible, causes and effects of interstate relations. In short, this paper asks why and how American military decisions came to have such pre-eminent political influence at Teheran and Yalta. Obvious corollaries include inquiries into the nature and influence of military decision-making on the part of the British and the Russians at these conferences. An examination into these areas will complement an understanding of the American foreign policy position.

The basic issue, however, is rooted in the American foreign policy tradition, and the main object of the discussion will be to examine and understand the historiographic detail in that context. The perspective of the paper most closely equates with that of the liberal-realist critique, which reinterprets the Cold War Warrior view of cooperation turned hard-line containment, while at the same time questioning the moderate-to-radical revisionist claims of economic determinacy. Thus, the perceptions of the participants at the time, and the pervasive influence of America's foreign policy tradition, are the final determinants of my thesis.

Great Powers and Summitry

A state's national policy is the system of strategy which it employs to ensure its security and to promote its prosperity.⁴ Diplomacy is a political instrument of national policy which has lost some of its importance due to the growth of international conferences, particularly summit conferences. The professional diplomat has not been replaced, but prime ministers and other heads of state have usurped his function more and more as modern means of transport and communication have evolved. At Teheran and Yalta, more perhaps than at any other meetings of heads of state during World War II, competing national policies came face to face in the personages of their chief articulators, and the implications of decisions taken were great in the politico-military and diplomatic-strategic realms. But basic to the theme of this discussion must be recognition that all such forms of international relations, including summit conferences, have conformed ultimately to the national interests of the proponent states. Thus, it has been said that "Whenever peace (avoidance of war) has been the primary objective of a power, the international system has been at the mercy of the most ruthless member of the international community."⁵

⁴ Frank H. Simonds and Brooks Emeny, The Great Powers in World Politics (New York: American Book, 1937), pp. 21, 29-30.

⁵ Henry A. Kissinger, A World Restored (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p. 1.

With these comments as an introduction, an examination of summit conferences and summitry in general among the great powers will be useful.

An idealized description of summit conferences portrays the highest elected officials of the great powers, negotiating from the seat of authority, with common sense and reason, without the formality of diplomatic protocol, and arriving at a quick, peaceful, and final agreement. However, experience has shown that entering the conference room and closing the door cannot shut out the power struggle of competing national policies in the real world. Similarly, the desire to cooperate for peace has not yet achieved great success in overcoming the balance of political power, or power politics. Dean Acheson's comments epitomize the good spirits and air of optimism which attend the conduct of summitry, but he warns of the potentially dangerous pitfalls. "So, on to the summit! --hoping that those who go will be transformed on the way into gods; and forgetting the Arab proverb that the ass which went to Mecca remained an ass."⁶

This warning should be well-taken, particularly for the American foreign policy tradition, which has some unique and complex considerations for the conduct of summitry. Among them, the fact that the chief executive of the United States

⁶ Dean Acheson, Meetings at the Summit: A Study in Diplomatic Method (An address at the University of New Hampshire, May 8, 1958), p. 3.

is at once its head of state and its military commander-in-chief has practical disadvantages, such as the difficulties and dangers of extensive foreign travel and absence from the nation's capitol. There are also political disadvantages since the whole prestige of the state is wrapped up in his policies and in personalized negotiations. These are valid problems in a way and to an extent not usually arising in the case of a removable British prime minister or an untouchable Soviet premier.⁷ President Roosevelt alluded to his practical dilemma in a note to Premier Stalin on 9 November 1943. "Personally my only hesitation is the place [Teheran] but only because it is a bit further away from Washington than I had counted on. My Congress will be in session at that time and, under our Constitution, I must act on legislation within ten days..."⁸ Though it was perhaps implicit, Roosevelt made no direct mention of the inherent dangers attendant to international travel by a head of state during wartime.⁹

⁷ Sir William Hayter, The Diplomacy of the Great Powers (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1960), p. 12.

⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States-Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran 1943 (Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, 1961), p. 24.

⁹ Foreign Relations- Cairo and Teheran, pp. 273-285 describe the near-miss torpedoing of Roosevelt's ship by its destroyer escort. Throughout the conference, security precautions were elaborate, since Teheran was believed to be filled with Axis sympathizers.

A British perception of American political philosophy is that "the American system of government is the most dangerously personalized one among all the major democracies."¹⁰ But this cannot be accepted as the dominant element, for American foreign policy has its roots deep in American attitudes and opinions. America's simpler past gives it a supposed tendency to overlook the really vital constituents of a situation and to impose upon it a pattern predicated upon the assumption that the world is populated entirely by "would-be Americans."¹¹ Thus, the liberal, moralistic, and pragmatic foreign policy of the United States perceives every issue in black-and-white terms, and as a problem which can be solved, no matter how difficult. When forced to intervene by moral self-suasion, the United States would reluctantly interpose its military might in a power vacuum to fight power politics. In so doing, the U. S. believed fully that the right of self-determination must be universal.

The result has been that European observers of American foreign policy, such as Max Beloff,

...cannot but be struck by the great difficulty which Americans seem to find in considering military and political problems as part of a single whole.

¹⁰ Max Beloff, The Great Powers: Essays in Twentieth Century Politics (London: George Allen, 1959), p. 192.

¹¹ Beloff, p. 194.

A corollary of this development was the growth of a tradition among American military men that the political consequences of their actions were no part of their business. In the Second World War they voiced consistent suspicion that their British allies took a different view and were too prone to allow long-range political objectives, other than total victory, to distort their strategic arguments.

Beloff's counter to such charges was simple:

Europeans know...that power politics and all that this implies are the necessary consequence of living in separate political societies and that war does not enable one to contract out of this condition.¹²

The harshness of this judgment against American foreign policy makers may not be deserved. But one argument following from such perceptions is that the American foreign policy tradition as described led to an unwillingness to attach territorial and political aims to military objectives. Moreover, this unwillingness can be characterized as firm anti-colonialism which proved strong enough to "unite" Roosevelt in cooperation with Stalin against Churchill and Great Britain, both in Europe and in the Far East.

The issues of the imbalance of political ends and military means appear time after time in virtually all wartime accounts of American foreign policy. American diplomacy and American military strategy are portrayed as divorced, as mutually exclusive. Whether this is so, and if so, why, can be examined in the context of decisions taken at the great

¹² Ibid., p. 195.

power summit conferences of World War II. In foreign policy, the self-determination of the peoples of the world and the security of the United States became coterminous concepts. Only in these dual contexts of morality and security could the United States bring itself to act in politico-military affairs. Thus, world order in the American view evolved as an undifferentiated whole, whose one part could not be threatened without endangering the entirety. Corollaries which follow are that peace must be indivisible and that an enemy's surrender must be unconditional.¹³ In domestic policy, the apparent successes and good feelings arising from the recently concluded summits bred strong public support for Roosevelt and his programs. The traditionally fearful charges of "soft on communism" did not begin until after 1945, when the political results of the summits could be discerned with the great benefit of hindsight. How justified was such 20-20 vision after the fact? The alleged separation of political and military considerations looms to the forefront again.

Charles Bohlen stressed the American foreign policy tradition as it applied to World War II. "We fought the war to win the war. We paid less attention than we should have to the possible consequences..., to what sort of political matters

¹³ Robert Osgood et al., America and the World: From the Truman Doctrine to Vietnam (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1970), pp. 34-39.

would require our attention." Between 1942 and 1945, he felt that "the United States military had a key voice, since military policy was the primary matter before us...we would not allow political considerations to deflect us very often from this central aim...".¹⁴ Dean Acheson observed that the wartime conferences of Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin were "primarily military staff meetings at the highest levels."¹⁵ That is, whatever political deliberations were held at the summits were ancillary to strategic military necessities. One conclusion may be that unsatisfactory results were obtained at these meetings since political concessions were granted to effect military agreement within the Grand Alliance. But this thesis must be tested against what considerations were actually at the base of military planning prior to and during the great power summits. For example, Acheson attaches a moralist perception to his estimate of Soviet desires at the summits. He perceived that they wished "to have their conquests growing out of the last war, what they call the territorial status quo, recognized, and to pursue the domination of the planet under cover of non-aggression pacts." He also feels that "the conference at the summit is an instrumentality by which the Russians plainly believe they can speed

¹⁴ Charles E. Bohlen, The Transformation of American Foreign Policy (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 21.

¹⁵ Acheson, p. 13.

the disintegration of the Western position without incurring risk. It offers the unique opportunity to carry on the cold war in the name of peace and by the processes usually associated with peace."¹⁶ This interpretation may seem to be at odds with Acheson's known preference for realistic power strategies rather than the unrealistic pursuit of utopian principles in international affairs.¹⁷ Perhaps there is a real attempt within the American foreign policy tradition to meld the moral with the realist thesis. Such a pattern would be observable in the roots of military strategy as it related to the wartime summits.

A common criticism of great power summitry is the publicity, or sense of theatre, which overhangs the conference proceedings and which interferes with the deadly serious business of negotiating and deciding politico-military matters of global importance. The physical presence of heads of state at these meetings may not facilitate the decision-making process at all, since the issues must be ripe for solution anyway, or else nothing will be accomplished. Witness the summit decisions which were turned over so often to the foreign ministers or military staffs for further consideration. It has been suggested that more

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁷ Glenn D. Paige, "The Korean Decision" in James N. Rosenau, ed. International Politics and Foreign Policy (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 467.

might be gained if the chief executives remained insulated from the great bulk of conference work, and then appeared for the final sessions where only signatures and good words were necessary. Acheson insists that the adjustment of Soviet ambitions is, in the final analysis, the only route to honest negotiations and peace. And while summit diplomacy is one methodology--a means for achieving these objectives--nevertheless the goal represents a most delicate process, one which is unlikely to occur "in the glare and blare of a conference at the summit."¹⁸ Still, Teheran and Yalta represent productive conferences in terms of political and military resolutions, quite apart from what judgments one passes on the ultimate effects. Hindsight and the overlay of the American tradition have heaped great criticism on the advisability of many of those decisions. This, of course, must be balanced with the perceptions of the participants at the time.

¹⁸ Acheson, p. 27.

Military Planning and National Policy

Behind the highly visible summitry, a vast operation of planning and coordination preceded every major decision taken, both political and military. These not-so-orderly processes were vital to the order and efficacy of the international conferences, and the major rationale of much that seems crucial to these meetings can be discerned from a study of lower-level methods and perceptions in the context of larger issues. For the American part, there seems to be a gradual shift from almost total absorption in strictly military, fight-to-win, unconditional surrender concepts to a greater appreciation for the complexities of the political realm, especially for the post-war period. A look at these processes may be useful in setting the scene for what followed at the summits.

President Roosevelt's personal methods in politics are well-known. Perhaps less known is the opinion that his "dominant role in politico-military matters was absolutely clear."¹⁹ Seeking and receiving multiple and often redundant side-inputs from personal emissaries, Roosevelt also obtained advice from his State, War, and Navy secretaries as individual advisers, not as a unified cabinet. In this manner, he managed rather effectively, if not disconcertingly

¹⁹ Ray S. Cline, Washington Command Post: The Operations Division (Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, 1951), p. 42.

to his official advisers, to keep the main strands of national policy almost totally in his own hands. The British system of national policy direction at the same time was much more orderly, and also formally constituted, by comparison. The highest executive authority in the United Kingdom government was the War Cabinet, presided over by the Prime Minister in his capacity as Minister of Defence, who in turn ruled over the Foreign Secretary and the military chiefs. "Thus, the ultimate political responsibility for the conduct of the war in all its aspects and the senior military advisers and agents of the government were brought together in one organization under the Prime Minister, who gave unity and finality to War Cabinet Defence Committee decisions."²⁰ The British military decision-making process was itself unified and coordinated jointly among land, sea, and air forces to complement this basic policy organization. It is therefore small wonder that British perceptions of American traditions and methods should approach incredulity. But on the other hand, it is not entirely correct or fair to imply that American planners continued long in their haphazard and tunnel-vision ways, especially in the face of a British 'united front.' In short, the Americans learned through competitive necessity from their British partners.

²⁰ Cline, p. 99.

The British-American combined military staff system of World War II has been described as "a unique accomplishment in co-operative effort by the military staffs of two great sovereign powers."²¹ Partly in self-defense against the British system, but perhaps mostly due to the ever increasing volume of coordinated policy requirements within the American military itself, the United States military chiefs' response to the well-established and efficiently-operating British system of interservice collaboration was the organization of a joint committee of army, navy, and army air representatives to coordinate U. S. military positions. Presentation of proposals via a unified military approach reaped dividends both internally and externally for the U. S. military. The soundness of the method became apparent as President Roosevelt came increasingly to accept and respect the considered and combined opinions of the three services. It also met the need to present a common front to their British counterparts. On both counts, confidence in and respect for this new staff system grew as the war progressed from midpoint in 1942-43 toward the ultimate events of 1945. This operational planning institution was quasi-formalized with the first meeting of the U. S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) on 9 February 1942. The United States now had an established, though not yet statutory,

²¹ Ibid., pp. 41-47.

counterpart to Great Britain's War Cabinet.

American and British participation at the Big Three summit conferences, particularly at Teheran, marked what was probably "the high point of general coordination of Allied military plans during World War II."²² The participation of the Soviet Union cannot be minimized, but it was always more complementary than cooperative. No such formal staff organization or communications system existed between the Russians and the Western Allies as existed between the United States and Great Britain in the form of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS). This joint organization met first on 23 January 1942, and thereafter assumed the great bulk of strategic planning for the western Allied war effort throughout the world. Indeed, the formal conferences at which the heads of their governments were usually present were designed "to reach final agreements on issues which had been thoroughly explored by the CCS. They were more nearly occasions for politico-military decisions than for the detailed work of military planning."²³ As such, the day to day CCS work supplied a basic pattern for the strategic direction of American and British armed forces. CCS responsibilities included explicitly the "formulation of policies and plans" related to the "strategic conduct of the war." Thus, joint resolutions would be approved

²² Ibid., p. 98

²³ Ibid., p. 100

by the President and the Prime Minister "whenever broad policy was involved," and therefrom "commands were established, troops deployed, munitions distributed, and operations undertaken."

It is significant to note at this point that the coordinating machinery of the United States military services during World War II became much more highly developed than any other part of the national policy decision-making apparatus. President Roosevelt came to rely heavily on the JCS/CCS for advice on the conduct of the war, but he established no comparable administrative organization for integrating this highly coordinated military planning with basic American foreign policy objectives. He preferred to coordinate this himself with the help of a personal staff of advisers, such as Harry Hopkins. The State Department under Cordell Hull was effectively shut out of the decision-making process. Thus, in the early stages of the war, there was a one-way flow of information from the military to the political realm, but not vice versa. Admiral William D. Leahy, in his unique position as Chief of Staff to the President, was able to fill the gap partially by supplying information to the JCS/CCS relevant to political decisions of military interest. But this indirect and informal liaison could in no way substitute for a formal staff network, which requires effective and continuous two-way communications to implement the strictly-defined doctrine of "completed staff work."

For Leahy was neither a member in full confidence of Roosevelt's inner circle, nor a regular member in attendance at meetings of the JCS.²⁴ In short, there was not yet an established National Security Council which would provide close, detailed, and frequent coordination in such matters. Indeed, it was still twice removed from its future reality.²⁵

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 98-104.

²⁵ Richard E. Neustadt, Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership (New York: John Wiley, 1960), p. 6.

Teheran and the War in Europe

A. Teheran: Setting the Scene

One of the earliest examples of sustained politico-military interaction is perhaps the long ocean transit of the presidential party embarked in USS Iowa (BB-61), enroute to Teheran. The forced togetherness of so many high-level planning and operational officials translated happily into discussion periods where Roosevelt offered some of the best and most frank guidance on politico-military affairs from his perspective that the JCS could hope to get. As a corollary, the U. S. military chiefs were able to collaborate closely and deliver to the president considered opinions on issues of deep, collective concern, issues which overrode the preferences of their individual services.

One such instance is a memorandum, which was signed by Admiral Leahy, and authored jointly by General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, U. S. Army; Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations; and General H. H. Arnold, Commanding General, U. S. Army Air Forces. The memo addressed itself to the urgent military matter to be hammered out at Teheran: the planned Allied invasion of northern France (finally code-named Operation Overlord) to defeat the German military forces and destroy Hitler's Nazi regime. The focus of the Joint Chiefs was upon the urgency of the need for unified command and single-mindedness of purpose for Overlord. Roosevelt's top military men agreed

and stated that they would even accept a British officer (Sir John Dill) as overall commander for European operations if that would help solidify the plan. This dramatic conciliation from military commanders who would send ultimately the majority of soldiers, sailors, and airmen into the future battle derived from a deep-rooted mistrust which the JCS harbored concerning the British Prime Minister's dedication to the primacy of Overlord.²⁶ This topic would generate endless discussion at Teheran and can be considered a major thread of far more significant results than initially conceived.

The major decisions taken at Teheran were ostensibly military. They included, most importantly: (1) the establishment of a priority commitment to the cross-Channel invasion of Nazi-held Europe in May 1944, and (2) the first overt Soviet promise of entry into the Pacific war against Japan. But the mechanics of the meetings reflected considerations of both strategic military planning and diplomacy. There is too frequently a tendency to minimize the latter in the context of Teheran. This is most often seen in observations which state that Teheran "was the last of the great international military conferences of midwar." Such statements tend to draw a hard and fast line between the military and political planning processes of the war-

²⁶ Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper, 1948), p. 767.



time Allies. Teheran becomes an all too convenient watershed for this division because it did in fact complete military-strategic planning for Europe until the success or failure of Operation Overlord could be known, sometime in late 1944. Moreover, international summit conferences between all three great powers did not resume until February 1945 (Yalta), and were held then under changed circumstances, "since the discussion of military matters on purely military grounds was rapidly becoming secondary in urgency to reaching international understandings on the post-war political world."²⁷ But it is not accurate to ascribe purely military motives to those decisions taken at Teheran and earlier. Nor is it justifiable to claim that politico-military considerations did not receive due recognition until the full results of the Yalta conference became known. In short, there is no clearly discernible line of division between the two, and the only relevant criticism of early and mid-war planning may be that it was too incremental on the western side, and that it placed too much good faith in the objectives of the Soviet Union, which were perceived as parallel to our own. But even this judgment may seem harsh in the light of internal American contingency planning, and of British fears of Soviet intent during this same period.

²⁷ Cline, pp. 231-232.

Before Yalta, American military planners were well aware of the political issues and their potential effects upon future military operations. In one conference briefing paper for American advisers, very simply titled "Political Questions Which May Be Involved In Military Discussions," a key query asked: "What is the Government's view on Soviet participation in War against Japan if further negotiations indicate that little contribution can be expected from the Soviets and the result of their participation would be to give them a greater voice in the Pacific settlement and the possible absorption of North China if the Kuomintang disintegrates?"²⁸ This cautious attitude on the part of the military reveals an unexpected breadth of awareness of politico-military interaction in terms of global interstate relations. Whether or not effective solutions to such questions were entertained or offered is another question, but the main point is that the American military did recognize and attempt to come to grips with political questions on a broad policy front.

The British perspective is also enlightening on the point of political and military awareness during the inter-war years, for they were much closer to the real issues of power politics in Europe than was the United States. In October of 1944, the Normandy Invasion, supported on the

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 330-331.

eastern front by Red armies, was five months old. The Russians had occupied both Finland and Bulgaria. They had advanced over most of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and across Poland as far as the Vistula River. They were in Hungary and Yugoslavia, and had reached the frontiers of Greece and Turkey. At this point, Churchill called for an immediate meeting of the Big Three to delimit the advancing Russian sphere of influence. But Roosevelt was in the middle of a campaign for re-election, and would not consent to travel until after 7 November.²⁹ By Christmas of 1944, the Battle of the Bulge was delaying the western Allies' advance, while the Russians drove up the Danube valley past Budapest and toward Vienna from the east.³⁰ By January of 1945, Red armies had reached the Oder River, only 100 miles from Berlin. The presence of Soviet troops in all of these areas gave the British good cause to fear the political consequences.

It may be that rather than a case of rigid separation of political and military issues, the simple facts of priorities and timing determined the combined western Allied response to developing situations. This is another way of describing the rationale for historical events in the context of the perceptions of informed and active participants

²⁹ Sherwood, pp. 832-834.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 843.

who lived through those events. A corollary of the priorities theory is that military planning and foreign policy came to affect each other more immediately and more directly as the war progressed.

In late 1941, prior to United States entry into World War II and before the era of joint U. S.-British military planning and cooperation, the British had conceived of and developed plans for a cross-Channel invasion of Europe, code-named at that time Operation Roundup.³¹ Great Britain stood alone at this point and was threatened direly. But before the plan had progressed very far, Pearl Harbor was attacked and United States entry occurred. No sooner had American and British planning become unified, than planning took on a decidedly political as well as military significance. Invasion plans across the English Channel in 1941, '42, and '43 were begun and then put aside due to lack of sufficient resources. But even during these early stages, the western Allies perceived the need to keep Russia in the war on the eastern front. The obvious way of accomplishing this objective was to promise and then mount, as soon as success was reasonably assured, a western offensive. Indeed, until the western front could be opened, the eastern battle lines would remain at an impasse deep within Russian ter-

³¹ Gordon A. Harrison, Cross-Channel Attack: The United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, 1951), pp. 6-12.

ritory. The British wanted a western front, but knew that they could not go it alone. The Americans wanted a western front to speed the victory in Europe, so that they might then shift the combined force of the Grand Alliance intact to the Pacific against Japan. The Russian objectives are more speculative, but certainly included the desire for an end to the bloody fighting in Eastern Europe, as well as whatever political gains could be maximized in the Pacific.

President Roosevelt had called for "action in 1942--not 1943." General Marshall had demurred, explaining that preparations were underway but were not yet fully ready. However, Roosevelt, true to his personalized methods, sent Stalin a note which virtually promised a western front in 1942. This on-again, off-again style of decision-making characterized Allied planning to a great extent in 1942, and points up the roots of U.S.-British dissension over European priorities. Moreover, U.S. naval victories in the Coral Sea and at Midway had relieved the immediate pressure for maximum speed of advance in European operations. Great Britain thus preferred to opt for extended operations in the Mediterranean, while the United States clung to the primacy of invading northern France.³² The

³² John Lewis Gaddis, The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947 (New York: Columbia, 1972), pp. 65-73; and Harrison, pp. 24-25.

upshot of the disagreement became the combined U.S.-British invasion of North Africa in November 1942. This operation represented a multi-faceted concession within the Grand Alliance. First, it was still far too early to contemplate the Normandy Invasion. Large-scale logistics requirements were proving a monumental problem, as attested to by General Marshall's difficulties with procurement of sufficient heavy landing craft from all over the world. The United States therefore conceded to Britain in its call for alternate, interim operations. Second, the North African invasion would relieve the Nazi military pressure on the Soviet Union. Such action would therefore appear as at least partial satisfaction of Russian demands for assistance, would likely keep them actively engaged in the war, and would enhance the probability that they would enter the Pacific war against Japan. Finally, a joint, western Allied invasion of Vichy-controlled French North Africa would be the first major step toward driving the Axis powers from the Mediterranean, a step which would obviously please Churchill and the British military.

Churchill saw a secondary goal of north African operations in the acquisition of bases from which to "strike at the underbelly of the Axis in effective strength and in the shortest time."³³ This argument became the basis of diffi-

³³ Harrison, p. 40.

culty between the British and American war strategies. Briefly, Churchill wanted to take advantage of situations of opportunity as they arose. Marshall, on the other hand, saw great dangers in fighting a world war on "a day-to-day opportunistic basis." The issues became a question of priorities between employment of incremental tactics or adherence to an overall grand strategy, of seizing opportunities for Mediterranean operations or of subverting the cross-Channel attack. The American preferences were clearly with Operation Overlord, and they regarded anything else which might compromise it with suspicion. The British, on the other hand, viewed American pre-occupation with getting to the Pacific war as soon as possible with equal ambivalence.

This running disagreement has been subjected to perhaps too superficial explanation by many historians who describe it as the archetype of American propensities toward solely military solutions and of British appreciation for political priorities. From the American point of view, the British argument for Mediterranean operations was defended in terms of a need to knock Italy out of the war. After this first goal had been achieved, the British would and did find new justifications for their "soft underbelly" tactics by calling for Balkan thrusts. Here lay the rub for U. S. planners; these plans were incremental, indefinite, and indecisive compared to the cross-Channel invasion plans, which even the British acknowledged were the only ultimate

hope for victory. The United States did not wish to be diverted from its avowed purpose: total defeat of all Axis powers and their unconditional surrender so that world peace under a United Nations organization might be restored permanently.

But the internal organization of U. S. planning was not so unified as it might have appeared to outside observers. The Navy's Pacific emphasis competed with the Army's European stress during planning operations and eroded the American policy position vis-a-vis the British. Moreover, Roosevelt's secrecy with political policies further eroded the American front. U. S. domestic politics completed the triangle of opinion on the American side. For Roosevelt felt that U. S. public opinion was a fragile thing which must be handled sensitively where American troops were involved. In an acknowledgement which ultimately shored up the American commitment to Operation Overlord, he admitted, "I would never survive even a minor setback in Normandy if it were known that substantial troops were diverted to the Balkans."³⁴ Later, at Yalta, Roosevelt also admitted privately to Stalin and Churchill that he did not feel that he could maintain support in Congress for U. S. troops to remain in Europe much more than two

³⁴Ibid., p. 92.

years.³⁵ Nevertheless, it seemed that, at least externally and officially, the United States would present a solid front of agreement, especially at the international conferences. But two events occurred to shake this unity. On 9 November 1943, two days before the President and his advisers departed Washington for Teheran, General John R. Deane of the U. S. military mission at Moscow sent a cryptic message. In it he warned that the Soviet Union might suddenly reverse itself on its demands for a western front, and instead call for intensified operations in Italy or in the Balkans. He attributed this to recent striking successes of Red armies, which might have convinced the Russians that an immediate, if limited, assist from the West might prove more fruitful than a full scale European invasion six months later. This news must have dampened seriously the feeling of unity and purpose which the U. S. intended to instill in the Grand Alliance by trumpeting the primacy of Overlord. It may have placed in great doubt also the probabilities for Soviet entry into the Pacific war against Japan.

The results of the Teheran conference show that the Russians lived up fully to the Americans' initial expectations, even to the point of verbally promising eventual Pacific entry. The results of the Yalta conference for-

³⁵ Tang Tsou, America's Failure in China (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963), p. 45.

malized this promise. It is not surprising, then, that a strong wall of American faith in Russian wartime military, and postwar political, intent should have been established. The only chink, which proved quite temporary, was Roosevelt's initiation of discussions on Balkan possibilities during the first plenary meeting at Teheran. Churchill was understandably delighted, while Roosevelt's military chiefs were quite chagrined. The President's purpose has never been satisfactorily explained, but may have been, first, an effort to table the main issues at once, while, second, maintaining the appearance of evenhandedness toward the British position. In any case, it did not significantly change the results.

B. The Cross-Channel Invasion and the Drive to Berlin

As the war in Europe came to a military conclusion and operational emphasis shifted into high gear in the Pacific, politico-military issues commanded center stage in the work of the national policy decision makers. The need for an effective methodology to deal with them became acute. American military staff officers learned from experience that their President, as well as the British prime Minister, could not make firm pronouncements on military strategy, even in the midst of world war, solely on the basis of considered advice from professional military men. They came to realize that other sources of information had to

be weighed, including the State Department and personal advisers to the President. What worried them was the fact that the planning and decision making processes of other agencies were not as integrated as was the basic military machinery. This created problems of perspective and communications between military and political branches. Early on, U. S. military planners proceeded on the premise that Roosevelt wanted "to win the war in the way most efficient from a strictly military point of view." This assumption "underlay American strategic planning for World War II."³⁶ General Marshall felt that military strategy had to be decisive in the conduct of a great war. It was therefore concluded that, while the war was on and American troops were in the line of fire, military considerations would take precedence over all others. The British, by contrast, were assumed to be planning in accordance with the requirements necessary to achieve postwar political advantage. It was well known that they had fully integrated political and military aspects of their war plans through the Executive Secretariat of the War Cabinet. But this fact alone may be too easily construed as indicative of short-term heedlessness for the lives of British soldiers, implying military sacrifices for purely political gains. The question should be: Just how much at odds was the British position with that

³⁶ Cline, p. 313.

of the Americans, and why?

More than others, Churchill and the British remembered all too well World War I losses, Dunkirk, and the slaughter of great land battles in France. Of the Big Three, only Churchill had fought that war, knew the great costs, and personally dreaded reliving it. Therefore, he may have wished to do anything which might make crucial decisions like Operation Overlord easier, or perhaps unnecessary. The tentative date set for Overlord's execution across the English Channel was 1 May 1944. By that time all logistical operations would have been completed and the milder weather would permit relatively safe crossings. But there were significantly different, if equally justifiable, reasons on the part of American and British planners for not rushing into the operation. As Army Chief, General Marshall had become absorbed totally in all facets of the problem, not the least of which was gathering from all over the globe as many landing craft as could be spared from lesser priority operations. He had also become acutely aware of the substantially increased risks of ocean-going amphibious maneuvers as opposed to the more conventional, protected-water, or riverine type. Marshall noted that failure of a river crossing meant a temporary reverse, while failure in the English Channel would signal disaster. It is difficult to fault him in this respect for giving the military aspects of strategic planning a clear priority.

Churchill never questioned Marshall's military judgment on such matters. But he did see disadvantages in not exploring other avenues, despite the fact that Overlord had been in the planning stage for two years, and that the Russians had been calling for a "second" front with increasing pressure. Churchill perceived at least tactical, and potentially strategic, drawbacks in the persistent time lags which accrued while the right conditions for Overlord were sought. This argument he "pressed upon the President and Stalin on every occasion, not hesitating to repeat the argument remorselessly..."³⁷ The Prime Minister saw no real diseconomies in implementing secondary operations throughout the European theatre, particularly in the Mediterranean. Such interim operations might prove enormously fruitful, even if they caused a six-to-eight week delay in Overlord. He stated as much, with some feeling: "Simpletons will argue, 'Would it not have been much better to centre all upon the decisive operation and dismiss all other opportunities as wasteful diversions?' "; whereas, "Alternatively I preferred a right-handed movement from the north of Italy,....,toward Vienna."³⁸ In recounting these arguments Churchill sought to counter the "legend

³⁷ Winston S. Churchill, Closing the Ring (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951), p. 346.

³⁸ Churchill, p. 345.

in America that I strove to prevent the cross-Channel enterprise called 'Overlord,' and that I tried vainly to lure the Allies into some mass invasion of the Balkans...".³⁹

In reflecting upon his eventual failure, he said, "I could have gained Stalin, but the President was oppressed by the prejudices of his military advisers...".⁴⁰

The President's Chief of Staff, Admiral Leahy, contended repeatedly that Churchill's motives lay in a pet project of ill-defined purpose to capture the island of Rhodes. As far as Leahy was concerned, "the American argument was so logical that I cannot but believe that as professional soldiers they [the British staff] knew Overlord was the most sensible move to bring to an end the war with Germany in the shortest possible time."⁴¹ These comments reflect the diversity of Western opinion surrounding the summit discussions held at Teheran.

The Western Allies did not present a united front of military judgment to Stalin, who did not hesitate to speak his mind. He questioned the wisdom of dispersing Allied forces from the Overlord commitment for any purpose, saying, "among all the military questions for discussion, we, the

³⁹ Ibid., p. 344.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 346.

⁴¹ Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, I Was There (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950), p. 209.

USSR, consider Overlord the most important and decisive."⁴² Stalin looked circumspectly at all operations from Italy across the Adriatic and into the Balkans toward the Danube. He contended that such plans were mere diversions and passed favorably upon only a supporting operation in southern France (code-named Operation Anvil), which would ultimately link up with the main, eastbound force of Overlord. The Soviet Premier therefore continued to press for a definite date for the Normandy Invasion and the nomination of a supreme commander; with this information he could return with reassuring news to his troops at the front and get on with the task at hand. Thus, Stalin repeated his support for Operation Anvil and chairman Roosevelt acquiesced, turning the matter over to the CCS for hammering out the military details. Immediately prior to the adjournment of the second plenary meeting at Teheran, Stalin taunted Churchill, saying, "I wish to pose a very direct question to the Prime Minister about 'Overlord.' Do the Prime Minister and the British staff really believe in 'Overlord?'" Churchill, who was aware of Stalin's propensity to deride him and things British in general, retorted, "Provided the conditions previously stated for 'Overlord' are established when the time comes, it will be our stern duty to hurl across the Channel

⁴² Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper, 1948), p. 787.

against the Germans every sinew of our strength."⁴³ Stalin literally backed Churchill into a corner to elicit a firm commitment to Overlord. The flavor and power of personal diplomacy in summitry is unmistakable here.

What has this intimate description of summitry to do with the military and political realities of the situation? The perceptions of the participants, once examined, help to illuminate the developing situation. With troops already battling up the Italian peninsula toward Rome, Churchill saw obvious advantages to thrusting northeastward toward the Balkans. He had proposed the subject first in November 1942, when Red armies were still 600-700 miles east of Warsaw.⁴⁴ Now that Great Britain was relatively secure from Nazi invasion, compared to a time before the United States had entered the war, Churchill had occasion to consider post-war matters. It is not strange, then, that he should foresee that the Balkans would be a good place for Anglo-American armies to be found at war's end.⁴⁵ For his part, Stalin sought to emphasize the urgency of Overlord in a primary and singular sense. He pressed home the fact that Russia

⁴³ Churchill, p. 373.

⁴⁴ Jan Librach, The Rise of the Soviet Empire (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 103.

⁴⁵ James B. Harrison, This Age of Global Strife (Chicago: Lippincott, 1952), p. 160.

could be defeated still on the eastern front, and implied that the Red armies would need all the support they could get from the West, both in the form of continued Lend-Lease equipment as well as heavy troop assistance on the western front. Stalin knew that the sooner the cross-Channel invasion began, the sooner the Nazi pressure to the east would slack off. The savagery of the German attack on Russia was matched only by the vast size of the area to be conquered and held through the terrible Russian winter. For good reason had Russia never been attacked successfully from the west. Nevertheless, Hitler's determination caused Stalin much concern, and he was eager to acquire the upper hand firmly. Also, Stalin may have believed that the tide was turning on the eastern front, even at the time of the Teheran conference. General Deane's message from Moscow had raised this possibility as a consideration for American planning. In any case, however, Stalin continued to press the concept of an advancing eastern front in concert with the Normandy Invasion. At this point, he, like Churchill, may have had time to consider the future. Thus he may have perceived that once Operation Overlord was firmed up as a singularly important event, the possibility of Anglo-American troop concentrations in east-central Europe would be minimal.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Librach, pp. 104-107.

Finally, as head of state of the Soviet Union, Stalin would consider Churchill's Balkan proposals as a jockeying for postwar imperialistic ambitions and advantages in what Russia viewed as its natural sphere of influence.⁴⁷

The American position seemed to be one of expediency. U. S. planners had a keen appreciation of the need to keep Russian armies in the field against the Germans. This was predicated upon their desire to defeat the Nazis as quickly as possible, in order to get on with the desperate battle in the Pacific. Thus Roosevelt had even considered an emergency invasion of western Europe in 1942, so high was his concern. The President had committed himself to a speedy end to the war in Europe, so he entered into an unspoken Soviet-American "community of interest," which was implicitly against Great Britain and ultimately against the future of an independent eastern Europe.⁴⁸

When Stalin immediately dedicated Russian troops to the Pacific effort against Japan just as soon as Germany was crushed, the Americans were understandably pleased. They could have no idea at the time that an atomic bomb would obviate the need for Russian support.⁴⁹ Rather the U. S.

⁴⁷ J. B. Harrison, p. 160.

⁴⁸ Robert D. Warth, Soviet Russia in World Politics (New York: Twayne, 1963), p. 281.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

military foresaw the valuable use of Russian bases and airstrips as much better locations than Chinese bases for carrying the war to Japan. The relatively short-range combat gains could not be weighed then against the unknown, political long term of the postwar period. The United States therefore wanted Overlord to commence on time and with minimal chance of failure.⁵⁰ When Stalin promised a simultaneous eastern front and subsequently launched it on schedule, the Americans developed great faith in Stalin's reliability, and this wall of faith "stood much abrasion before it crumbled."⁵¹

Shortly after the Teheran conference ended, Charles Bohlen concluded in a memo that "The result (of Stalin's Teheran statements) would be that the Soviet Union would be the only important military and political force on the continent of Europe. The rest of Europe would be reduced to military and political impotence."⁵² Roosevelt either did not share Bohlen's gloominess of feeling, or perhaps thought that the war progress resulting from the meetings overshadowed such facts which might in any case be changed

⁵⁰ Foreign Relations- Cairo and Teheran, p. 675.

⁵¹ Herbert Feis, Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought (Princeton: Princeton University, 1957), p. 264.

⁵² Charles E. Bohlen, Witness to History: 1929-1969 (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 153.

later. At the same time, the American Embassy in Moscow reported a "revolutionary change" in the Soviet attitude toward the United States and Great Britain. The Soviet propaganda machine was obviously very enthused over the "Historic Decisions" taken at Teheran.⁵³ But the euphoria was short-lived. As early as January of 1944, Ambassador Harriman lamented that official business had become once again very difficult to complete with the Russians. He informed Churchill by letter that "The Russian Bear is demanding much and yet biting the hands (Lend-Lease) that are feeding it."⁵⁴

Poland soon returned to the fore as the most difficult political problem. According to Churchill, the Polish issue clouded the success of Teheran more than any other. The problem of moving the borders westward had not been stated precisely enough to bind the Russians. When Roosevelt reiterated the point that his opinion on the frontier issue had left Teheran in a flexible state, both Stalin and Molotov claimed that Roosevelt had agreed specifically to the Curzon Line.⁵⁵ This conflict has been attributed

⁵³ Sherwood, p. 804.

⁵⁴ Feis, p. 279.

⁵⁵ Foreign Relations- Cairo and Teheran, pp. 599-601, describes the Curzon Line as a generally north-south line along the Bug River, approximately 100 miles east of Warsaw. Stalin asked that parts of eastern Prussia, including the ports of Königsberg and Tilsit be given to the Soviet Union.

to a possible error in translation. The Soviet government, however, saw an overriding need for a strongly pro-Russian Poland to prevent a future re-attack by Germany. In the early months of 1944 before D-day (6 June), Churchill made his final pleas for the scrapping of Operation Anvil in southern France and for the adoption of a plan to cross the Adriatic from Italy into Yugoslavia in a northeast thrust toward Vienna. But once again the Normandy Invasion assumed singular importance, and his plans "were cast aside unused."⁵⁶ Churchill regarded "the failure to dominate the Aegean as an error in war direction which cannot be excused by the fact that in spite of it victory [military, if not political] was won."⁵⁷

What conclusions can be drawn about the cross-Channel invasion? To what extent were its military operations means toward political ends? What military and political considerations were weighing upon the combat commanders' decisions? On 25 March 1945, Anglo-American armies were in possession of the entire west bank of the Rhine River. Montgomery's British-Canadian forces crossed the Lower Rhine and pushed northeastward for Bremen, Hamburg, Berlin, and the Baltic Sea. After winning the industrial Ruhr area, Generals Simpson's U. S. 1st and Hodge's U. S. 9th Armies spear-

⁵⁶ Churchill, p. 346.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

headed across the Elbe River on 12 April, only 60 miles from Berlin.⁵⁸ Field-Marshal Montgomery had pressed repeatedly for "a single Allied thrust to Berlin," ever since the western Allies had crossed the Rhine. Eisenhower at the same time made it clear that he was "more interested in the Ruhr than Berlin." Thus, while Monty and Great Britain wanted Germany's political heart, Ike and the United States wanted its military-industrial heart. There was evidence to back up the U. S. position. On the military side and in support of Eisenhower's view, General Omar Bradley advised that casualties would be very high in any offensive against Berlin. In pragmatic terms, Bradley perceived the estimated losses as "A pretty stiff price to pay for a prestige objective, especially when we've got to fall back and let the other fellow take over." Both Forrest Pogue and William Shirer agree in essence on Ike's militarily-oriented tactics at the Elbe River:

Eisenhower's purpose now was to split Germany in two by joining up with the Russians on the Elbe Though bitterly criticised by Churchill and the British military chiefs for not beating the Russians to Berlin, as he easily could have done, Eisenhower... [was] ...obsessed at this moment with the urgency to head southeast after the junction with the Russians in order to capture the so-called National Redoubt, where it was believed Hitler was gathering his remaining forces

⁵⁸ William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), pp. 1101-1105.

to make a last stand... .⁵⁹

Ike was therefore unwilling to countenance the Nazi's final end-run, nor to run the risks of unnecessary losses while taking Berlin first. On 16 April 1945, Eisenhower's American and Zhukov's Russian armies met at Torgau on the Elbe, some 75 miles south of Berlin. At this point, the European military operations planned at Teheran were completed.

Stalin had effectively carried out his military manifest destiny by successfully completing in reverse that which Churchill had so zealously advocated. Rome had been liberated by Anglo-American troops on 4 June 1944, two days prior to D-day. At that time, Red armies were advancing into Romania from southern Poland. The Russians entered Bulgaria and Hungary in September and established contact with Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia. Soon they were in Bucharest, Sofia, and Belgrade.⁶⁰ At Yalta and Potsdam, the western pair of the Big Three attempted to modify and reverse some of the extensive Russian gains in east-central Europe. Although many mollifying words were put down on paper, little of significance was actually changed in the postwar territorial situation. Roosevelt went on to fight the war in the Pacific; Stalin consolidated his gains in

⁵⁹ Forrest Pogue, "Why Eisenhower's Forces Stopped at the Elbe," World Politics IV, 3 (April 1952), pp. 356-368; and Shirer, pp. 1101-1105.

⁶⁰ Librach, p. 122.

eastern Europe; Churchill, seeing himself closest to the losing end, said:

...vast and disastrous changes have fallen upon us in the realm of fact. The Polish frontiers exist only in name, and Poland lies quivering in the Russian-Communist grip. Germany has indeed been partitioned, but only by a hideous division into zones of military occupation...⁶¹

It is interesting to note the comments of the arch-enemy of the Grand Alliance. On 12 December 1944, in what might have provided the impetus for the Nazi thrust which generated the Battle of the Bulge, Adolph Hitler addressed his generals:

Never in history was there a coalition like that of our enemies, composed of such heterogeneous elements with such divergent aims... Each of the partners went into this coalition with the hope of realizing his political ambitions... America tries to become England's heir; Russia tries to gain the Balkans... England tries to hold her possessions... Even now [one] can watch how these antagonisms grow stronger and stronger from hour to hour.⁶²

It is difficult to associate such insights into one's opponents with the ravings of a lunatic.

The Soviet Union remained firm in placing the Polish frontiers at the Curzon Line on the east and the Oder-Neisse

⁶¹ Churchill, p. 407.

⁶² Shirer, p. 1091.

Rivers on the west.⁶³ Russia's interpretation of a government "friendly" to the Soviet Union came to mean a Communist-controlled government. Thus the Polish government-in-exile at London was excluded in favor of the Soviet-controlled Lublin government, who would eventually represent Poland at the 1945 San Francisco United Nations Conference. Although Churchill, Roosevelt, and later, Truman, urged consideration for the London Poles and disputed the Oder-Neisse border, which displaced six million Germans, there was no real countervailing power to move the Russians.⁶⁴ Compromises agreed to at Yalta and Potsdam were never adhered to, and the West recognized finally, though reluctantly, the reality of the split between themselves and the East.

Returning to the original issue, "Did Ike halt at the Elbe for purely military reasons?", the answer must be a qualified no. Both Marshall and Eisenhower, as the two leading military strategists in the European theater, were painfully aware of the political ramifications of their decisions, though neither attempted to be seers. But they

⁶³ James B. Harrison, p. 267. The Oder River flows in a generally southward direction from Stettin on the Baltic to Frankfurt, whereafter it zig-zags sharply to the east and then southeast to Breslau. The western tributary of the Neisse River continues directly south of the Oder from Frankfurt to Liberec. There is a considerable wedge of territory between these rivers in the area south of Frankfurt. The Russians wanted it for Poland.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

would not compromise their military professionalism or their men's lives, and in this respect President Roosevelt and American opinion supported them fully. The American foreign policy tradition would not have allowed an amoral, or essentially political, goal to tip the scales. Thus the decision to stop at the Elbe must be viewed as the best politico-military decision which could be made under the circumstances, given the disposition of forces, the avowed ends of American foreign policy, and the climate of U. S. public opinion.

The events of the Normandy invasion and its results should not be viewed as occurring in a military vacuum, nor in a totally uncoordinated and incremental process. It is true that the American planners lagged behind initially with respect to the integration of the British system, but the gap was recognized and to a great extent filled as the war progressed. In the early years, liaison between the military staffs and the White House was carried on almost entirely by a few high officials, who could not begin to handle the ever-increasing volume of work requiring political and military coordination. Moreover, President Roosevelt often "formed his impressions and made his decisions on military matters, as on others, without the benefit of fully systematic interdepartmental staff work."⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Cline, p. 315.

Indeed, Roosevelt often used his personal staff to draft messages on military operations to Stalin and to others without first seeking the advice of the JCS. The American military chiefs frequently became aware of military-related messages from Roosevelt to Churchill via feedback from British members of the CCS.⁶⁶ This was at best an embarrassing and awkward method of coordinating United States military and foreign policies. But the picture was not entirely a negative one, and things did improve.

In 1943, War and State Department coordination was continuous, if informal. The lack of systematic cooperation, as well as the U. S. military's envy of the integrated nature of comparable British planning operations has been discussed. Generals Marshall and Wedemeyer had both recognized this deficiency for some time, and finally had begun to voice their complaints. Wedemeyer observed:

The JCS frequently require information and advice as to how their military decisions will affect our foreign and national policies, or as to whether the decisions are in conformity with international law, or as to what effect, if any, their decisions will have on our national interests. Some solution will be necessary if we are to achieve that unity of national effort which is so well exemplified in the British organization.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Richard M. Pfeffer, ed., No More Vietnams?: The War and the Future of American Foreign Policy (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 62.

⁶⁷ Cline, pp. 317-318.

By the end of 1943, the State Department began to furnish the JCS with formal guidance in foreign affairs, thereby establishing what came to be known as the "politico-military field of Washington staff work." The compound adjective "politico-military" came into official use "to characterize problems, policies, and actions requiring consultation and preferably agreement between the State Department and the armed services." Such problems, policies, and actions became evident as early as the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference of October 1943, when Big Three representatives discussed political issues, which, although outside the competence of military plans alone, had nevertheless been created by the military situation, and thus could be settled only on a joint basis.

Late 1944 found Washington's staff work in politico-military relations still too informal, unsystematic, and behind the issues to deal as effectively with the issues as was required. Ultimately the United States was forced to see a need for what has been described as "the major development of World War II in administrative procedures for handling politico-military affairs,... the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee [SWNCC]." ⁶⁸ This precursor of the National Security Council was established in December 1944. The organization's formation may be perceived

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 326.

as a watershed in the increasingly complete transition from purely military decision making to a fully integrated politico-military apparatus.

Yalta and the Far East: Soviet Pacific Entry

1943 may be characterized as the year of military decisions for Europe. In 1944 and early 1945, the complete military defeat of Nazi Germany was the primary issue. To the extent that operations in the Pacific against Japan were discussed, they took a poor second place in international politico-military planning among the Big Three. But this is not to say that the subject was ignored--far from it. The point to remember is that Pacific operations had developed early on as an American venture, almost exclusively run by the JCS. By the time the joint Allied decision making machinery began to crank up to address the defeat of Japan in the same way it did the defeat of Germany, Japan surrendered and politico-military issues were thrust to the forefront without benefit of the extensive and careful, joint planning which had preceded those in Europe. Thus the comparison is necessarily limited.

As early as the Casablanca Conference of January 1943, the CCS had considered the future Pacific war in the same light as the ongoing war in Europe. "From every point of view, operations should be framed to force the defeat of Japan as soon as possible after the defeat of Germany. Planning should be on the basis of accomplishing this within twelve months of that event."⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 336.

The timetable was soon extended to eighteen months, and discussions among American military planners centered on the alternatives of a naval blockade-aerial bombing attack alone or in concert with a full scale land invasion similar to that at Normandy. As the success of the island-hopping campaign from the southern Pacific became apparent, and as the Japanese opposition continued to be fierce, the United States firmed up its commitment to a massive land invasion supported by air and sea power, to begin as soon as possible after VE-day. A massive Japanese force was believed to be defending the home islands, and a combat-experienced force in Manchuria was thought to be committed to holding its gains. Though Roosevelt and his military advisers had relegated China's military role in the outcome to a secondary one, the President nevertheless clung to his determination to make China a great power in his global political plans for the postwar period. The issue of atomic weapons and their possible use had not yet arisen, and would not until Potsdam. Therefore, long-range strategic plans for the Pacific war developed in conventional terms, drawing upon European experiences and remaining within the context of the Grand Alliance. Soviet entry into the Pacific war continued to hold U. S. support generally, if not individually. U. S. military planners remained skeptical of any early surrender by Japan, but the possibility

of a Japanese collapse was noted in some American circles, and contingency planning for a military occupation was started with a target date of on or about VE-day. This is not meant to counter the overall "worst-case" planning which guided American military decisions, but it does point up their awareness, however, limited, of the political possibilities. However, as late as 4 June 1945, the United States still believed that "Probably it will take Russian entry into the war, coupled with a landing, or imminent threat of landing, on Japan proper..."⁷⁰

The conference at Yalta in February 1945 reinforced this general trend in Allied planning, although little is discernible in the official protocol and communique of the meetings. Publicly, Yalta restated the goals of Teheran, with attempts to specify the political issues in Europe. Secretly, Yalta firmed up the military course of the war in the Pacific, formalizing the eventual entry of the Soviet Union and according to it in return very significant political concessions. Moreover, the entire agreement was concealed from the Chinese Nationalist government. Thus, Chiang Kai-shek did not learn officially the details of American and Soviet policies with respect to China from February, when the Big Three signed the document, until August 1945, when the Chinese were apprised fully of, and

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 312-344.

hardly able to reject, its conditions. The rationale for complete secrecy from all but the highest levels of the Grand Alliance was ostensibly military; it was feared that Japan, if it learned of Soviet intent to enter the Pacific war, might mount a pre-emptive counter-attack, which could disrupt Russian troop and supply massings. In this regard, Chinese Nationalist security was known to have significant leaks and therefore could not be trusted with such sensitive information. Roosevelt's appreciation of the need for military security apparently overrode his desire to make China's great power status a political reality. The domestic fears which bothered the President concerning the risks of Balkan operations and American opinion would return to haunt his successor in the form of charges that U. S. foreign policy had caused the so-called 'loss of China' in later years. Out of such fears would come the later Marshall Mission and the eventual U. S. withdrawal from China.

The major contribution of the Soviet Union in the Far East, entry into the war against Japan, has a history which antecedes Yalta considerably. Implicit assurances of entry were given at the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference of October, 1943.⁷¹ Stalin himself had reaffirmed

⁷¹ Herbert Feis, The China Tangle: The American Effort in China From Pearl Harbor to the Marshall Mission (Princeton: Princeton University, 1953), pp. 100-101.

this intent personally at Teheran in November 1943, greatly impressing the U. S. military chiefs.⁷² Thus, the probability of Soviet participation received frequent and increasing reinforcement, which in turn prompted a continuing perception among American planners of its military validity. The JCS levelled no specific criticism at the Yalta Far East Accords,⁷³ although they may have focused more upon the strategic military considerations rather than the postwar political implications. It is unlikely that they were unaware of the political issues, given the fact of broadly stated political ramifications in their pre-conference briefs. But their desires to influence the political aspects were probably limited by their pre-occupations with the immediate and strategic, military necessities. For just as moving large concentrations of troops and heavy equipment across the English channel represented a far greater challenge than more conventional water-crossings, so also did the prospect of massive amphibious operations against fortress Japan, across the Pacific from Okinawa, represent another quantum jump.

The military rationale of Yalta must be studied in

⁷² Foreign Relations- Cairo and Teheran, p. 500.

⁷³ The text of the Yalta Protocol and Communique does not contain the Far East Accord, which was revealed only much later. However, it is included in many works, such as Diane S. Clemens, Yalta (New York: Oxford University, 1970), App. A.

the context of a two-ocean war. Since the conference was held only six weeks after the Battle of the Bulge, no one would guess at how long the Nazis might hold out, or as a corollary, how long the subsequent battle against Japan might last. There is a variety of perception over these points, but in general it can be said that the United States wanted the Soviet Union 'in' the Pacific war.⁷⁴

A British perspective, however, may qualify the U. S. rationale in terms of the American foreign policy tradition. It is well known that Churchill considered China and the Far East a secondary issue, at least as long as Chiang Kai-shek remained in power. Churchill had been sorely frustrated by Roosevelt's emphasis on China, especially at Cairo and again at Yalta. Indeed, he considered the concept of great power status for China "an absolute farce."⁷⁵ Moreover, he disclaimed any part in formulating the Far East Accords and signed them only to preserve Big Three unanimity. But what was Great Britain's foreign policy in Asia, and how did it stand vis-a-vis American policy? It is possible to define British policy in Asia as a desire to retain colonies and colonial rights

⁷⁴ Almost all cold war literature takes up the question of Soviet Pacific entry; see further discussion in section titled "Key Military Issues Reviewed."

⁷⁵ Winston S. Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), p. 701.

such as extraterritoriality. In China's view, this was adverse to Chinese tradition, pride, and unity; in American eyes, this was in direct opposition to the principles of the Atlantic Charter. Both could construe Great Britain as an imperialist power, whereas Russia by comparison was not. Thus, Roosevelt may have had in mind an ulterior political motive for Russian entry into the Pacific war. That is, he may have wanted to insure another 'united front' against Great Britain, just as he did in Europe with the Balkan question.⁷⁶ There is much speculation in such theory, particularly if one considers the Russian motives with respect to the Chinese Communists. The question arises as to why Stalin covertly supported the CCP, while at the same time overtly signing a treaty of friendship with the KMT. Did he mean to have his cake and eat it too? Did the CCP's ultimate victory surprise him, when in reality he might have preferred an at least temporarily divided China, like Korea and Indo-china, with the CCP in control of the north and the KMT in the south?⁷⁷ How did the Russian participation in China relate to the American position in Japan? Did the Russian and American heads of

⁷⁶ Chester Wilmot, "Stalin's Greatest Victory," in R. F. Fenno, ed., The Yalta Conference, 2nd ed. (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1972), pp. 67-68.

⁷⁷ Harold C. Hinton, An Introduction to Chinese Politics (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 25.

state agree implicitly to monopoly control in independent Asian spheres as a quid pro quo? Truly, Herbert Feis' metaphor of The China Tangle is an apt one, for there are many more questions than clear answers.

Perhaps there is a single thread which can be drawn from the maze to join American military planning and summitry concerning Asia to the American foreign policy tradition. First, American foreign policy for China was colored by Roosevelt's perception of great power status for China after the war, and this was implied in the Cairo Declaration of October 1943. Second, the need for Soviet entry into the Pacific war against Japan assumed that the war had a long way to go, and that continued cooperation with the Soviet Union in the postwar period would be the case. Both parts of the American view proved to be unrealistic. Most significantly, the United States misread and misunderstood the role and intent of the Chinese Communists. The signals which were received were misjudged at the field level and distorted to dim reflections of their original meaning by the time they reached Washington.

Chiang Kai-shek had clung to the promise of the Cairo Declaration, which called for the return of Manchuria and Taiwan after Japan's defeat. Roosevelt hoped that the implications of Cairo for China in the postwar world would spur Chiang on to greater military efforts.⁷⁸ This was to

⁷⁸ Feis, The China Tangle, p. 109.

be a vain hope, marked by the personal and professional clash between General Joseph W. Stilwell and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. This seemingly local problem intensified into a running feud which concealed the much larger and deeper issues of Sino-American misunderstanding and disagreement. A simple view of the problem focuses upon the relative merits of Stilwell's burning desire to re-enter and re-conquer Burma compared to Chiang's insistence upon protecting the status quo in China itself. But there is much more to the basic issue. Stilwell had an uncommonly strong regard for the abilities of the Chinese soldier, given effective leadership, but Chiang's socio-political problems outweighed and eventually undermined his ability to meet the military problems. The Asian goals of the Soviet Union at this time cannot be known with any certainty, but it is unlikely that the proliferation of opinion from personal meetings of American officials with Stalin et al. added any real understanding. Moreover, the CCP and Mao Tse-tung were at the time unknown quantities, despite the establishment of an American observer's group in their midst.

Chinese-American difficulties intensified to a point where Roosevelt decided to send a personal emissary, General Patrick J. Hurley. Hurley, a midwestern lawyer of sorts, accepted a mission as fact-finder and mediator to

improve the situation. He made a great attempt to practice the same personal diplomacy of which Roosevelt himself was so fond. Initially, he was successful in gaining the friendship of both Stilwell and Chiang. He had held apparently intimate discussions with Stalin and Molotov enroute to China, gaining from them verbal assurances of good faith and cooperation. He had succeeded even in persuading the Chinese Communists to draw up a reasonable list of actions which would permit a CCP-KMT coalition. Hurley's eventual report to Roosevelt that "There is no issue between you and Chiang Kai-shek except Stilwell..."⁷⁹ is representative of his fundamentally moralist attitudes and personalized diplomacy, which combined to make him see all problems as resolvable in traditionally American, moral-legal terms. It also led to General Stilwell's ultimate recall, an event which could not be forestalled any longer by his staunch Washington advocate, General Marshall.

Sino-American relations improved temporarily with the new team of now-Ambassador Hurley and General Albert C. Wedemeyer, but Chinese Nationalist military performance in the field against both Japanese and Chinese Communist forces remained extremely marginal. Chances of a CCP-KMT union vacillated, without results, and any semblance of meaningful social or political reform within the KMT never pro-

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 198.

gressed beyond the planning stage. In November 1945, Chiang was very anxious to have Nationalist troops re-enter the northern territories to accept the Japanese surrender. American advisers counselled vainly for consolidation of KMT positions in the south as a precondition for northern deployments. But Chiang's will carried the day, and the U. S. acquiesced to transporting his units. Immediate and considerable difficulty arose in the form of opposition from Soviet and Chinese Communist troops, who first prohibited and later delayed Nationalist troop debarkation at several northern ports. Thus, American advisers became increasingly hesitant to engage U. S. forces in what seemed increasingly like imminent civil war.⁸⁰ When the situation was in extremis from Washington's point of view, Truman dispatched the recently retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, George C. Marshall, to set things right. Marshall was to accomplish what Stilwell, Hurley, and Wedemeyer could not. Roosevelt's great faith in the personalized diplomatic method had been taken up by his successor, Harry S. Truman.

The Marshall Mission may represent a key to the nature of and the results issuing from the American style of foreign policy. Marshall's great influence on the Washington

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 384.

military scene had carried over into the Allied domain through the CCS, and it ascended to an equal influence over U. S. politico-military affairs due to Roosevelt's and later Truman's dependence upon the JCS in such matters. Indeed, Roosevelt had decided to retain Marshall in Washington as CJCS while naming Eisenhower as supreme commander of Operation Overlord. It was well known in 1943-44 that Marshall yearned for combat command to add the final touches to a brilliant career. But Roosevelt had told him, "I feel I could not sleep at night with you out of the country."⁸¹ Truman's respect for this man was no less, for he characterized him as "the greatest living American." Among his peers, Marshall was accepted as pri-mus inter pares on both sides of the CCS.

Marshall indeed towered over the military scene in Washington, due to his ability "to weigh calmly the conflicting factors in a problem and so reach a rock-like decision... ." He epitomized the center of American politico-military consensus on World War II decisions. He possessed the entire confidence of the army, of Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, and of the Congress. Therefore it could be said that "in general American strategy...emerged from the White House much as it had emerged from the Pentagon."⁸²

⁸¹ Pfeffer, p. 63.

⁸² John Ehrman, Grand Strategy, Vol. VI October 1944-August 1945 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), pp. 342-344.

From the American perspective, then, who could tackle the impossible issues of Asia better than Marshall? Yet it is noteworthy that the failures of so many otherwise qualified leaders did not deter the basic American belief in a genuine solution.

Marshall's instructions created within the American policy position a dangerous paradox. To begin with, all efforts were to be made toward achieving genuine unification of the KMT and the CCP. Then, on the one hand, if the CCP refused to cooperate, Marshall was authorized to provide transportation to Nationalist troops as necessary to reclaim Chinese territory. But on the other hand, if Chiang refused to cooperate, he was nevertheless to be assured of continued American support.⁸³ Thus, no matter what mitigating factors may have attended CCP non-cooperation, and conversely, no matter how ineffective the KMT may have become as a political and military force, the American policy position hamstrung itself from the beginning with upholding the implicit and explicit provisions made two years earlier at Cairo.

From the earliest days of Stilwell's C-B-I assignment until the last days of the Marshall mission, the American perspective of what was really happening in the Far East and what American foreign policy toward it should be re-

⁸³ Feis, The China Tangle, pp. 418-419.

ceived only dim glimmers of understanding from a variety of qualified, but disjointed, sources. One of the more controversial sides of the issue was the opinion and influence of those Americans who formed the Observers' Mission to the CCP base at Yen-an. These men included State Department officials assigned to the American military staff for liaison. The informal politico-military liaison which this group provided planted the seeds of acrimonious competition between themselves and the more conservative KMT-advocates for Washington's decision-making ear.

Prominent State Department specialists, among them John Paton Davies, John Stewart Service, and George Atcheson, were labeled pejoratively as the "Davies-Service clique"⁸⁴ for their authorship of numerous reports critical of the Nationalist regime and favorable toward the Chinese Communists. John Service perceived the then-current (1944-45) and official line on China from Washington as deficient in three aspects: (1) The United States saw the primary importance of China as an increased effort against Japan, favoring short-term military decisions at the expense of the political long run; (2) The U. S. desire for a political settlement between the KMT and CCP was defined in terms of American democratic-legal principles of the same order as

⁸⁴ Don Lohbeck, Patrick J. Hurley (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1956), *passim*.

those which permitted a bipartisan foreign policy to exist in the American system; and (3) U. S. decision makers formed a consensus which stated that the Soviet Union basically supported American foreign policy in China, and that an eventual Sino-Soviet pact would confirm and sustain that belief.⁸⁵ Debate over these points formed the main thread of the Hurley-Service debate and also of the vacillating American policy toward China. The result was that Washington sustained Hurley and discredited the State Department specialists. President Roosevelt died soon thereafter on 12 April 1945, and Truman sent Marshall to continue the vain American attempt at coalition.

The American plans crumbled when none of the actors performed as expected. But the United States erred also by not changing its policy in the light of altered circumstances. Perhaps the desire of the U. S. military to have the combined strength available in a KMT-CCP coalition against the Japanese caused them to overlook or to misjudge the true nature and intent of the Chinese Communists. This would have been reinforced by the traditional American doctrine of unconditional surrender, whose often-repeated corollary called for ending the fighting as soon as possible. Finally, the fear of a separate peace

⁸⁵ John S. Service, The Amerasia Papers: Some Problems in the History of U.S.-China Relations (Berkeley: University of California, 1971), pp. 83-86.

between China and Japan may have compounded the issues further, just as it did in Europe concerning the Soviet Union and Germany. Recognizing these fears, as well as the American commitment to achieving a coalition of Chinese forces, why could not both the CCP and KMT have exploited this fear and hope by converting them into levers to gain concessions from the U. S. in the way of time, military aid, and political advantage? Even the perceptiveness of a Stilwell or a Marshall would have fathomed this situation only in terms of their sense of duty toward China as a needed military asset. In a negative sense, whatever the merits of China as a military power, the gross size of Chinese men under arms would tie up a large number of Japanese troops who would otherwise be used elsewhere against the Allies.⁸⁶

The charge of separation of military and political factors must be qualified again, for the United States did become progressively more aware of the politico-military ramifications of its China policy. However, the metamorphosis came much too slowly to have any effect, and the American foreign policy tradition prevailed.

The Marshall mission should have driven home to U. S. policy makers at last the intractability of the American position in the Far East, but it did not. It did not even fully demonstrate to them the basic insolubility of the

⁸⁶ Tsou, pp. 35-43.

issues between the CCP and KMT. Thus, in part, the American foreign policy position was just as rigid as the Asian problems which it failed to solve. Just as if Marshall had never gone to China, the Chinese pursued their destinies and American policies tried vainly to alter them, while at the same time supporting them.

Patrick J. Hurley's efforts to make sense out of China's situation typify the American image of Asia, Communism, and the American foreign policy tradition. Hurley was a midwesterner, a lawyer, a sometime army general, an ambassador, and a personal friend of Franklin Roosevelt. He held more than enough qualifications to be a member of Washington's decision making elites. But like many of them, he was totally ignorant of Communist theory and practice. Thus, he saw the first permissive stages of Chinese Communism at Yen-an as evidence of agrarian reform, not of dedication to a radical nationalism imbued with the communist principles of Marxism-Leninism. Moreover, Hurley had never studied the historical development of CCP-KMT relations and the resulting deep ideological controversy. He believed that the CCP could not compete with the KMT without massive aid from the Soviet Union. Therefore he misjudged badly their grass-roots capabilities.⁸⁷ Stalin

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 185-192.

had personally assured Hurley of his country's good faith with respect to U. S. goals in Asia. Said Hurley, "Stalin keeps his word."⁸⁸ If such beliefs formed the thread of 'informed' American opinion on China, then how could Chiang Kai-shek, as silent and involuntary partner to the great power decisions taken at Yalta, avoid signing a pact of friendship with Stalin, a pact precipitated by the Yalta Far East Accords? In short, it seems that the United States never understood China well enough to "lose" it, but its Far East policies certainly contributed to the inevitability of events there.

Dissenting American opinion was in some respects no less free of the traditional American foreign policy constraints. John Service failed to see the fundamentally totalitarian nature of the CCP, despite its "democratic" appearance which was displayed to best advantage at Yenan. Thus, his favorable recommendations for the Chinese Communists concerning coalition and even direct U. S. military aid and assistance did not take into consideration the fundamental role of ideology in the CCP, as in other communist parties. The shortsightedness of these views, though directly opposed to Hurley's, is also rooted primarily in the morality and unity of the American tradition,

⁸⁸ Harry S. Truman, Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope (Garden City: Doubleday, 1956), p. 66.

wherein "The ability of a tightly organized and rigorously disciplined elite under able leadership to make a flexible choice of slogans and means in its endeavors to capture power was a political fact which American specialists, trained and immersed in the liberal, democratic environment of a free society, failed to take adequately into account."⁸⁹ If American military and diplomatic professionals on both sides of the political spectrum of informed opinion could not sufficiently grasp this concept, it is certainly no wonder, then, that the ultimate decision makers could not do better for Asia and the world at the summits.

⁸⁹ Tsou, p. 230.

The Key Military Issues Reviewed

In an effort to examine the great power politico-military relationships of World War II, this paper has studied three issues of Allied war strategy which had far-reaching significance: the decision for the cross-Channel invasion of Normandy; the decision against an Anglo-American drive to Berlin; and the perceived need for Soviet entry into the Pacific war against Japan. These issues included critical questions of military judgment which became involved ultimately in political decisions. It is to an examination of the perceptions of both civilian and military participants who were very close to these issues that this section turns.

A. The Cross-Channel Invasion

Among the panoply of American rationales for the cross-Channel invasion, none stands out as well or recurs more frequently than the perceived need for a single, decisive operation which would simultaneously bolster sagging Allied, and especially Russian, morale, and strike at the heart of Nazi Germany. On 16 June 1942, President Roosevelt advocated increased lend-lease shipments to the Soviet Union, saying to Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, "The whole question of whether we win or lose the war depends upon the Russians. If the Russians can hold out this summer... we can definitely win." On 14 February 1944, Roosevelt

wrote to Morgenthau: "Russia continues to be a major factor in achieving the defeat of Germany."⁹⁰ Thus, Allied success against the Axis in Europe became defined continuously in terms of the need for a simultaneous and massive, eastern and western front against Germany. Complementary and decisive action were the cornerstones of Allied strategy. The memoirs of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson reinforce this basic perception by citing United States entry into the Atlantic war via Great Britain as the natural and best route, while deprecating the inherently greater risks of Mediterranean operations as proposed by Churchill. Stimson advocated ceaselessly for General Marshall's cross-Channel plan. "If Stimson or Marshall had been Commander-in-Chief, the invasion of France would in all probability have been launched in 1943, one year earlier than it actually occurred."⁹¹ Indeed, Stimson seemed even to begrudge Eisenhower et al.'s qualified agreement with the need for some Mediterranean operations to assuage Russian demands, to utilize available resources most efficiently, and to acquire needed air bases in southeast Italy. However, he did admit to a difference in kind between these latter reasons, which ultimately complemented the plans for a cross-Channel

⁹⁰ John M. Blum, From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of War 1941-1945 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), pp. 84-87.

⁹¹ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper, 1948), p. 428.

invasion, and the rationale put forth by Churchill, which Stimson suspected as an attempt to supplant North Atlantic operations.⁹²

Forrest Pogue's biography of George Marshall reinforces the concept of an American commitment to Operation Overlord as the primary military issue:

In short the most clearly defined, least complicated, most decisive effort for the United States in Europe was a thrust from the south and west of England across the English Channel. ...

The Americans saw clearly enough the political advantages Churchill might gain for Britain by his [Mediterranean] policies. But if these did not serve American interests, the U. S. Chiefs of Staff preferred to deal in terms of military advantages.⁹³

But this should not be interpreted strictly as irrefutable proof of the United States' overstress on military issues and its attendant lack of political realism. Nor should it be cited as an example of American unanimity on war-time priorities. For there were lower level military planners who became disaffected gradually with the need for Overlord as the primary operation. Among them, Brigadier General John E. Hull of the Operations Division grew frustrated over the repeated delays and problems associated with preparations for a joint cross-Channel invasion. Vice

⁹² Stimson, pp. 433-434.

⁹³ Forrest Pogue, George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory 1943-1945 (New York: Viking, 1973), pp. 10-11.

Admiral Charles M. Cooke foresaw a chance to advance naval goals in the Pacific at the expense of Operation Overlord. Nevertheless, by the summer of 1943, it became safe to say that movements to downgrade Overlord were gaining little headway in Washington.⁹⁴

General Marshall's concern over logistics for the Normandy invasion preoccupied him much of the time, but he maintained the broad picture of European theater requirements as well as any American leader. Emphasizing the political issues, he repeated, "I doubt if there was any one thing except the shortage of LSTs that came to our minds more frequently than the political factors. [But]... political factors were the business...of the President."⁹⁵ Thus, though political issues were admittedly paramount in the long term, Marshall justified his rationale because military casualties were very heavy costs to him, and he could not permit himself or others, including President Roosevelt, to become hardened to them. It was this overriding concern of America's top military commander which made him stand firm against Churchill's final attempts to siphon off Overlord's resources for continued Mediterranean operations. Marshall was adamantly opposed to any diversions toward Balkan operations, and said:

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 241-242.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 315-316.

The "soft underbelly" had chrome-steel sideboards. That was mountainous country. There was no question in my mind that the West was the place to hit. If we had accepted the Balkan thing, it would have scattered our shots. They are letting political considerations after the fact dominate the whole concept.⁹⁶

Moreover, Marshall had only reluctantly agreed to the Italian landings at Anzio, and the grievous setbacks experienced there hardened his views considerably against further diversions from what he considered to be the primary operation.

Even Churchill's own military chiefs, Field Marshals F. M. Brooke and Wilson, had their doubts about Churchill's "Balkan liking." They had to admit that, if all went well, no one would criticize their success, but that if operations were to become bogged down for a time, then monumental logistics problems might develop and prove to be their downfall.

General Eisenhower harbored two suspicions about Churchill's call for an "underbelly" campaign: first, that Churchill's concern was too great as a political leader for the future of the Balkans, and too little for its purely military problems; and second, that he was indulging a personal desire to vindicate his World War I support of the Gallipoli campaign, a disastrous affair which had occurred on the peninsula between the Dardanelles and the Aegean Sea in Euro-

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 415-419.

pean Turkey.⁹⁷ But Eisenhower tempered these reflections with the observation that Overlord's detractors have suffered only because the invasion of Normandy was a great success, and that a great reverse on D-day would have had profound effects. He also recalled the earlier Allied (Canadian) raid on Dieppe, a seaport in northern France on the English Channel in August 1942. This surprise operation had suffered high casualties and had raised ominous fears for Overlord's less zealous advocates.⁹⁸ Finally, Eisenhower's military experience dictated that "In all the campaigns, and particularly in western Europe, our guiding principle was to avoid at any cost the freezing of battle lines that might bog down our troops in a pattern similar to the trench warfare of World War I."⁹⁹ Therefore, to the question, "Could a cross-Channel invasion have been mounted in 1943?", the answer must be no. General Omar Bradley listed three reasons militating against it. First, the U. S. Navy was engrossed in its buildup for the Pacific war, one factor among many competing military considerations which had divided the U. S. perspective. Second, the British defeat at Tobruk, Libya increased the

⁹⁷ Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (Garden City: Doubleday, 1948), pp. 194-195.

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 198-200.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 449.

perceived need for action in the Mediterranean, action which would solve pressing issues such as Churchill's call for interim Mediterranean operations and Stalin's call for immediate assistance. Third, the unforeseen Soviet successes at Stalingrad, together with American naval victories in the Pacific, eased the urgency for an immediate western front from both the Soviet and American perspectives. The combination of these war-related events created, in Bradley's view, a climate which "had wrecked Allied plans for a 1943 Channel crossing."¹⁰⁰

B. The Drive to Berlin

The American perspective which caused the western Allies ultimately not to complete the eastward drive to Berlin must be understood in the context of the British argument for just such a thrust. Prime Minister Churchill and Field Marshal Montgomery were the primary exponents of the British view. On 4 September 1944, Montgomery sent to Eisenhower a European situation report with his considered observations and recommendations. One read, "I consider we have now reached a stage where one really powerful and full-blooded thrust toward Berlin is likely to get there and thus end the German war." According to Montgomery's version, Ike replied on 15 September 1944, "Clearly, Ber-

¹⁰⁰ Omar N. Bradley, A Soldier's Story (New York: Henry Holt, 1951), pp. 188-191.

lin is the main prize... . There is no doubt whatsoever, in my mind, that we should concentrate all our energies and resources on a rapid thrust to Berlin." On 31 March 1945, a chagrined Montgomery complained about what he perceived as Eisenhower's renege on the primacy of Berlin. Requoting Ike's "no doubt" statement, Montgomery failed to complete the American's reply which had concluded, "Our strategy, however, will have to be coordinated with that of the Russians; so we must also consider alternative objectives."¹⁰¹ Thus, there seems to be a dichotomy of views, wherein Montgomery attempts to demonstrate that Eisenhower was not the skilled mediator, but a somewhat vacillating decision-maker.

For Montgomery's part, any armed force which had victory in sight had also to favor political over military considerations:

The important point was therefore to ensure that when that day [VE] arrived we would have a political balance in Europe which would help us, the Western nations, to win the peace. That meant getting possession of certain political centres in Europe before the Russians--notably Vienna, Prague and Berlin.

Like Churchill, Montgomery lamented the fact that his recommendations were not accepted, and he cited the results:

Berlin was lost to us when we failed to make a

¹⁰¹ Field-Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, K.G., Memoirs (New York: World Publishing, 1958), pp. 244-248.

sound operational plan in August 1944, after the victory in Normandy.

The Americans could not understand that it was of little avail to win the war strategically if we lost it politically; because of this curious viewpoint we suffered accordingly from VE-Day onwards, and are still so suffering. War is a political instrument; once it is clear that you are going to win, political considerations must influence its further course. It became obvious to me in the autumn of 1944 that the way things were being handled was going to have repercussions far beyond the end of the war; it looked to me as if we were going to "muck it up." I reckon we did.¹⁰²

Eisenhower's version of these events is somewhat different. Concerning the September 1944 exchanges, Ike reported that Montgomery claimed only a need for adequate supplies to take Berlin. Eisenhower disagreed, however, since there were neither adequate stocks on hand in Germany, nor railway bridges over the Rhine by which to transport them. Moreover, he listed three reasons for not going to Berlin: first, the Soviet Union would probably be there ahead of the western Allies, given the disposition of forces; second, a Berlin spearhead would immobilize the rest of the western front; and third, German units west of the Elbe would have to be kept divided and away from any last stands at the so-called National Redoubt. Eisenhower was aware of the Nazi hope that inter-Allied disagreements over war strategy might result in time gained for German con-

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 296-297.

solidation and for more favorable terms than unconditional surrender. He was also unwilling to permit the realization of any of these hopes. Thus, when, on 28 March 1945, as Supreme Commander of European forces, Eisenhower informed Stalin of his intent to move out on the Anglo-American flanks after the Elbe-juncture with Russian troops, Churchill objected strenuously to Roosevelt. He claimed that military aspects were being overtaken rapidly by political issues and therefore called for an immediate thrust to Berlin. Roosevelt and Marshall upheld Eisenhower's judgment. Ike defended his actions as "a purely military move." Marshall seconded this: "The single objective should be quick and complete victory."¹⁰³

General Walter Bedell Smith's report of his staff service with Eisenhower supports the Supreme Commander fully with respect to Berlin. Though once an important goal, Berlin "was losing all meaning as a military objective" by the end of January 1945.¹⁰⁴ Smith also stresses the fact that the Elbe represented a natural line at which Anglo-American troops could meet Russian troops with the least chance of unfortunate incidents. This meeting was the subject of detailed planning and coordination for sig-

¹⁰³ Eisenhower, pp. 396-402.

¹⁰⁴ General Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's Six Great Decisions: Europe 1944-1945 (New York: Longmans, Green, 1956), pp. 181-182.

nals and recognition aids. Moreover, Smith observes that, had the western Allies gone to Berlin, they would have had to abandon it eventually, except for their assigned occupation sectors. Indeed, U. S. public opinion would not have permitted American forces to keep Berlin long, because the American people were still counting on the good faith and postwar cooperation of the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁵

General Bradley revealed the extent of concern which was generated by the news of a so-called National Redoubt. Intelligence indications of this last-ditch Nazi plan were exploded finally as a myth of fantastic proportions in the minds of a few fanatics. But the threat at the time was too ominous to be ignored, and "in consequence it shaped our [U. S.] tactical thinking during the closing weeks of the war."¹⁰⁶ But it seems that the Redoubt issue was really always secondary. The political value of going to Berlin would have been watered down by the pre-set zones of occupation, which had been hammered out by the Grand Alliance. The prestige value of such a drive, especially from the American perspective, could in no way compensate for expected losses in men, losses which American military planners were loath to suffer.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 221-223.

¹⁰⁶ Bradley, pp. 536-537.

C. Soviet Pacific Entry

The early entries of James Forrestal's diary contain many references to the possible entry of the Soviet Union into the Pacific war against Japan. The Secretary of the Navy recorded his perceptions of how other officials interpreted the military need. A comparison of Forrestal's observations and other reports by military commanders seems to indicate an American ambivalence about Soviet entry, or at least a definite swing in opinion from "for" to "against" as the war progressed. In February 1945, Forrestal's version of General MacArthur's view is that the United States could not concentrate needed strength to its best advantage against the Japanese home islands unless the Japanese Army in Manchuria was already heavily engaged. It would take Russian entry, estimated at about sixty divisions. Clearly, then, MacArthur envisioned a struggle of heroic proportions, nothing less than a Far Eastern, two-front war against Japanese forces in the Pacific.¹⁰⁷

By April 1945, General Marshall was hoping for Soviet entry "at a time when it would be useful to us," not after the United States had "done all the dirty work." This concerned attitude reflects the feeling that the Russians were breaking the promises which they had made at Yalta. Yet

¹⁰⁷ Walter Millis, ed., and E. S. Duffield, The Forrestal Diaries (New York: Viking, 1951), p. 31.

it can still be seen that "in the spring of 1945 the importance of bringing Russia into Manchuria in massive force loomed far larger than it was to do in much later retrospect." Also, the United States was committed implicitly not to send troops into mainland China.¹⁰⁸ By July 1945, the prospect of an imminent Japanese collapse became visible for the first time. A perhaps unforeseen corollary of this was the attendant inevitability of Soviet Pacific entry.¹⁰⁹

The Japanese Kwantung Army, with close to a million men under arms, had been in Manchuria since 1932, supposedly awaiting the day of attack upon Russia. It was considered by some military observers to be a potentially autonomous force which would fight on, even after Tokyo surrendered. Moreover, the successful U. S. effort to develop and ultimately use atomic weapons was at this time a wholly unknown quantity.¹¹⁰ Thus, despite continuous and increasing lack of cooperation on the part of the Soviet union, even close observers such as General Deane in Moscow continued to see a need for Soviet entry as an

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 74.

¹¹⁰ John R. Deane, The Strange Alliance: The Story of Our Efforts at Wartime Cooperation with Russia (New York: Viking, 1947), pp. 223-225.

event which "would hasten the end of the war."¹¹¹

In early July 1945, while President Truman was en-route to Potsdam for the final meeting of the Grand Alliance, General Eisenhower made it a point to caution him about Soviet Pacific entry. At that stage of the war, Ike had come to disapprove of Soviet entry, though he is quick to point out that he did not foresee the East-West split or the outbreak of the cold war. He "merely feared serious administrative complications and possible revival of old Russian claims and purposes in the Far East..."¹¹²

General MacArthur echoed these misgivings in his memoirs:

From my viewpoint, any intervention by Russia during 1945 was not required. The substance of Japan had already been gutted, the best of its army and navy had been defeated, and the Japanese homeland was now at the mercy of air raids and invasion. Although in 1941 [sic] I had urged Russian participation..., by 1945 such intervention had become superfluous.¹¹³

The seeming contradictions of opinion and the apparent helplessness of these observers to change the course of events in the Pacific as World War II ended suggest that such events may acquire an energy of their own, quite apart from the initial intentions of their framers. Nevertheless, the overriding concern of American planners through-

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 254.

¹¹² Eisenhower, p. 441.

¹¹³ General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 261.

out the war was never deflected and may represent the major cause of the Americans' apparent ambivalence to Soviet entry. Charles Bohlen describes this concern aptly. "Roosevelt's one reason for seeking Soviet entry into the Asian war was to save the hundreds of thousands of American lives his military experts estimated would otherwise be lost."¹¹⁴ If any theme flows continuously through these three military decision-making processes, the paramount concern for American lives as a motivating force underlying the rationale for all plans does, and it may be considered further the most tangible thread of America's moralist foreign policy.

¹¹⁴ Bohlen, Witness to History, pp. 195-196.

The American Foreign Policy Tradition Revised

This paper has examined the salient historiographic detail surrounding three crucial, great power decisions of World War II: the cross-Channel invasion in Europe against Germany, the Allied drive toward Berlin, and Soviet entry into the Pacific war against Japan. In comparison to the classic U. S. cold war warrior position of cooperation-turned-containment, I classify my perspective as liberal-realist, wherein the perceptions of the participants, engaged at the time in eventful decision making in the context of world war, and influenced by the overlay of America's moral-legal tradition, represent the compounded determinants of what actually happened, in terms of both cause and effect. However, the account thus far should be balanced with a sampling of the moderate-to-radical revisionist perspective to accommodate the socio-economic attitudes of the liberal critique.

In general, revisionists believe that American foreign policy has been anything but idealistic and misguided. Rather the United States has been "an aggressive, expansionist, and imperialist power,"¹¹⁵ which has required continuous growth abroad to sustain its hegemonial, economic empire. Translated into a politico-military rationale for American de-

¹¹⁵ Gerald A. Combs, ed., Nationalist, Realist, and Radical: Three Views of American Diplomacy (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 25.

cisions taken during World War II, this indictment becomes a list of "could haves," with which the U. S. might have proceeded differently, especially vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. Thus revisionists claim that:

1. The United States could have launched the western European front in 1942 or '43, thereby alleviating Russia's military burden considerably;

2. The U. S. could have recognized the Soviet claim to a sphere of influence in eastern Europe by explicitly exempting that area from the provisions of the Atlantic Charter;

3. The U. S. could have helped Russia to repair its war losses by extending a generous loan without political strings, and by permitting extensive reparations removals from defeated Germany;

4. The United States could have disarmed Soviet suspicions of American intent by sharing the secrets of its nuclear weapons monopoly.¹¹⁶

In short, this argument charges that the U. S. maneuvered in both Europe and in Asia to maximize its military and political positions at the expense of its postwar rival, the Soviet Union. The ultimate goal was the sustained pre-eminence of American capitalism, a goal whose concomitant effect has been the cold war.

¹¹⁶ Gaddis, p. 356.

These issues have been the subject of extensive debate among scholars, most often in terms of the primacy or lack thereof in the economic determinist component of revisionist theory. The question impacts upon this paper in the context of an alternative perspective on wartime politico-military planning and how it affected the American foreign policy tradition. Revisionists report the development of a national security ideology, beginning in World War II, which rationalized the commitment of American military power in behalf of foreign policy goals. Indeed, this ideology fostered a national security bureaucracy which defined its goals in terms of power politics and which used military means to achieve them. World War II thus militarized American foreign policy. As increasing percentages of the national budget were expended for national security, those agencies which were most concerned with military affairs and foreign policy acquired commensurate power in decision making within the U. S. government. Thus the military services and the State Department developed substantially increased roles and functions during World War II. Given Roosevelt's and Truman's great respect for and trust in their military advisers, the integrated nature of the JCS planning process in the later war years, and the traditional American desire to win the war quickly, it is easy to understand how the military acquired preeminence

at the international wartime summits. But revisionist writings indicate that this preeminence assumed harmful proportions for American foreign policy. They identify the coining of the term "politico-military" as a semantic cover for considerations which should have remained separate, but which were combined to exploit America's power monopoly on a global basis. An ideology was created, "which would assure a permanent place in American foreign relations for the military outlook, military personnel, and military techniques for achieving international objectives."¹¹⁷

In the postwar period, the United States military resolved to retain its special status in foreign policy decision making. The military chiefs were successful in convincing their civilian leaders of this need, which became defined in terms of the American foreign policy tradition. Navy Secretary James V. Forrestal requested a report from Ferdinand Eberstadt in 1945 on the merits of unifying the War and Navy departments and of organizing for national security. Forrestal's stated objective was to "guarantee that this Nation shall be able to act as a unit in terms of its diplomacy, its military policy, its use of scientific knowledge, and finally of course in its moral and political leadership of the world."¹¹⁸ The Eberstadt

¹¹⁷ Pfeffer, p. 64.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 65.

Report acknowledges the perceived separation of military from political considerations in the conduct of American foreign policy. "Our foreign policy and military policy were not closely related. Our history presents a record of failures properly to relate our foreign and military policies and to maintain them in careful balance."¹¹⁹ The solution, which became a unified Department of Defense with continued separation of the individual services, all coordinated under a National Security Council, replaced the SWNCC and was designed "to find a means of institutionalizing the relationship between those responsible for military policy so that a proper balance will be maintained without endangering civilian supremacy."¹²⁰

In all of this revisionists saw the problems of international relations defined in terms of national security, wherein "force would continue to be the primary instrument of American diplomacy."¹²¹ Domestic U. S. politics and the economic requirements of American capitalism thus become the prime causal factors behind American foreign policy formation. Moreover, revisionist theory ascribes to the

¹¹⁹ Report to Hon. James Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy, on Unification of the War and Navy Departments and Postwar Organization for National Security, October 22, 1945, (Washington, D. C.: Superintendent of Documents, 1945), p. 25.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 47.

¹²¹ Pfeffer, pp. 58-66..

national security bureaucracy a level of coordination and cooperation that amounts to harmonious orchestration of American foreign policy, through skillful manipulation of domestic politics operating in mutual support of the economic needs of market capitalism. This argument is in many ways simply a mirror image of the cold war warrior position, which viewed Soviet attempts to strip Germany of its industrial capital as a plot to exploit a vanquished nation. Therefore, any U. S. loan to help Russia rebuild its own devastated economy would have to be contingent upon a show of good faith for the postwar period. In short, Russia would have to convince domestic American opinion that such assistance would be productive and in line with American moral concepts. The revisionist critique sees the issue in a different light. That is, when the United States offered the Soviet Union a reconstruction loan with political strings attached, it did so with the intent of restricting Russia in world economic competition. America's so-called desire to spare Germany from economic death was in reality a case of self-interest wherein Germany represented a potentially large, postwar market.¹²² Yet it seems that, in their dependence on a narrow economic

¹²² Charles S. Maier, "Revisionism and the Interpretation of Cold War Origins," in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., Perspectives in American History (Lunenburg, Vermont: Stinehour, 1970), pp. 313-346.

determinism as the primary criterion underlying American foreign policy, and on the use of military force to implement political aims in support of this basic theory, the revisionists have given an important supporting element an undeservedly and unsubstantiated primary role. The domestic collusion, which they cite in evidence, both militarily and politically, can be understood better as competitive jockeying for popular support of American foreign policy than as a coordinated machinery for propagandizing America's need for economic hegemony. It was also cast in terms which were supportive of and derived strength from the American tradition. Thus, while revisionist theory has raised issues very worthy of consideration, its rationale has been inconclusive in terms of answering the questions which this paper asks. The alternatives which it poses for politico-military decision making during World War II are no less subject to criticism than those which were actually taken.

Conclusion

American foreign policy has a complex tradition which is portrayed alternatively by realists as defined by power-political considerations of the international system, and by revisionists as a structure based primarily upon the needs of a hegemonial market capitalism. Overlaying both views is a strong moralist cast, wherein American foreign policy accepts the notion of democratic ideals as its guiding force and justification. Thus, whether realist or revisionist in perspective, the transcendent thesis of American politico-military involvement during World War II included a moral imperative superimposed upon a perceived national security need, military or economic. This is cited as "the original design for an international order based on the United Nations and the Big Three, a design shattered by the onset of the Cold War."¹²³ The desires of President Roosevelt for a stable and permanent world peace, insured primarily by the great powers, remains a fundamental part of American foreign policy, whether it is interpreted as internationalist or neo-isolationist. The moralist overlay was explicit in the Truman and Eisenhower doctrines, continued through the Korea and Vietnam wars, and is implicit

¹²³ Robert E. Osgood et al., Retreat From Empire?: The First Nixon Administration- America and the World Vol. 2. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1973), p. 20.

in the so-called Nixon Doctrine today. It represents a continuum for the roots of American policy.

Since Woodrow Wilson's presidency, the right to self-determination of the free peoples of the world has become coterminous with the national security interests of the United States. Each time the U. S. has decided to intervene in world politics, a necessary part of the decision to intervene has been a perceived moral need which reinforced the basic issue of national security. In this context, world order becomes identified with American security as an undifferentiated whole, whose one part cannot be threatened without threatening the entirety.¹²⁴ In short, nation-states are interdependent and their interaction is subsumed under a universal moral law. Therefore, what is good for one nation is also good for the world of nations.¹²⁵ American foreign policy planning during World War II for the postwar period called for remaking the world in accordance with a moral-legal structure, and then regulating its basically "free" operation via an international organization of united nations. The great powers, Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and China would act as control agents until the United Nations peace-keeping organization

¹²⁴ Robert W. Tucker, "The American Outlook: Change and Continuity," in Osgood, America and the World, Vol. 2., pp. 34-39.

¹²⁵ Frederick S. Dunn, Peacemaking and the Settlement with Japan (Princeton: Princeton University, 1963), pp. 9-10.

was in full operation, whereafter "moral norms would replace power politics."¹²⁶ Implicit in such plans was the persistent American assumption that the Soviet Union would continue to act in concert with the other great powers in the postwar period. But even more basic to the conduct of American foreign policy was the moral linkage between our national security and global security. Rejecting balances of power and spheres of influence, the United States opted to integrate national and global security through an international peace-keeping organization which would be supported in great part by large doses of bilateral, U. S. foreign aid and U. S.-dominant, lopsided alliances, both directed at the containment of a spheres-of-influence-seeking communism.¹²⁷ The American realization of the shift from U. S.-Soviet wartime cooperation to postwar competition required only a change in method, not in substance, so far as American foreign policy principles were concerned. The United States still adhered to its moral obligation to make the world safe for democracy. The fact that the enemy was no longer the Axis, but now the Communist powers, did not really change the foundation of American policy.

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 18-21.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp. 45-49.

The politico-military plans so carefully laid down at the World War II summits began to crumble in Europe and in Asia when both the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communist Party did not behave as expected. In eastern Europe, the political promises of Teheran and Yalta were blatantly disregarded from the American perspective. Promises of free and impartial elections, and of equitable territorial settlements as quid pro quos for western Allied concessions all came to naught. It became increasingly difficult to ignore the rise of a Soviet sphere of influence throughout eastern Europe. In Asia, the predictions of discredited U. S. officials came true, even if not exactly for the reasons predicted. The CCP proved an exceptionally viable political and military force, while the KMT lost ground on both levels and in every quarter. During the war years, the American decisions to press for unconditional surrender from both Germany and Japan represented a reversal of the rational order of political ends and military means. In part this was attributable to the so-called American propensity for divorcing diplomacy from military power.¹²⁸ But this is not a sufficient reason. It was also due to the moralist nature of American foreign policy which, in total war, had to seek total victory over an immoral enemy to vindicate

¹²⁸ Tsou, p. 35.

its use of force. As the military efforts approached their unanticipated political conclusions, this means-end imbalance continued to cause problems for American decision makers, who found themselves unwilling and unable "to use military power purposefully to achieve political objectives," or "to abandon unattainable goals in order to avoid entanglement in a hopeless cause."¹²⁹ The moralist component of American foreign policy immobilized the normal interaction of political, military, and economic aspects which would have been otherwise quite inseparable, especially over the long term. The ultimate American decisions and their results can be construed as an unwillingness to pay the military price which was necessary to achieve its political objectives. That is, the policy of seeking victory as soon as possible and the attendant demand for unconditional surrender were believed to be the most important as well as moral way of conducting a war. "Get in and get out fast" became the watchwords. The urge to bring American military personnel home quickly overrode political considerations and made the issues academic, if still morally tinged. Given this moralist cast and the relative politico-military positions of the great powers in 1945, it is likely that no

¹²⁹ Ibid., pp. ix-xi.

matter what the United States might have done, politically, militarily, or economically, it could only have postponed, but could not have averted, the final outcome.¹³⁰

Over a century ago, Walter Bagehot wrote in The English Constitution (1867) that "Nations touch at their summits." The Grand Alliance of World War II epitomized this concept in the context of decisions taken by the great powers at Teheran and Yalta. It is unlikely and perhaps undesirable that debate over the military and political interrelations emanating from those summit conferences will ever cease. They have been researched from many points of view. This paper has sought to critically examine why military decision making rose to a position of political preeminence. The sources are virtually limitless, and the modest sampling which I have completed is only a beginning. But it has provided me hopefully with a meaningful perspective.

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp. 46-56.

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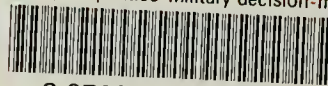
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